

Everyday we find ourselves in many situations and different dilemmas. The questions that we do not ask ourselves very often are why did we even pick a certain restaurant? We did we buy a specific product or adopted a new habit? There is much more to our decisions than meets the eye. Robert Cialdini cracked the code with his six principles of persuasion, shedding light on the subtle forces that guide our choices. The principles that he describes are reciprocity, commitment, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity. Unpacking my personal real-life stories and examples can lead to a very interesting conclusions and observations. It is quite fascinating to explore how these principles sneak into our everyday lives, shaping the way we say "yes" to things, often without even realizing it. Let's dive into these layers and discover the secrets behind our decision-making.

The first principle described by Cialdini is reciprocity. Reciprocity translates into receiving unexpected help or a favor from someone and feeling compelled to return it in some way and time. I can recall very simple examples from my own life, like helping my friend with homework back in middle school. I helped her with English and she later reciprocated it by helping me with maths, which I was not very good at. I also remember a time when I helped my neighbour to transport his new refrigerator into his flat and a few months later he agreed to look after my rabbit when I went on holidays. A more recent and appropriate example could be my friend, who I work with in a certain company and helped her getting a raport ready during a very stressful period. She mentioned this to my Team leader and that was one of reasons I earned my promotion. These are just some examples that prove the authenticity of reciprocity.

Another principle named by Cialdini is commitment. What Cialdini emphasizes here is the remarkable influence of committing to a specific goal or decision on subsequent actions. It's the concept of staying true to our word, even when faced with challenges. People are simply consistent, even in the face of a challenge. Like many people, I have brands that I simply follow and somewhat trust, even if there are potentially better alternatives. I also attend swimming pool at least once a week, even if I struggle to maintain this consistency. The commitment I have made to my health and well-being

prevails, propelling me to stick to the weekly swim, no matter the hurdles. My close friends and family are also aware that I enjoy rivalry and never miss a chance to provoke me into doing something, for better or worse. Whether it is a spontaneous game night or a challenge thrown my way, I find myself consistently embracing the spirit of rivalry. It is a commitment to the enjoyment of competition, a facet of my personality that holds steady even when faced with the unpredictability of these challenges.

People very often rely on opinions of others, like peers or social circle, to form their own or determine their behaviour. This refers most of the time to uncertain or troublesome situations. This is what Cialdini describes as social proof. Just recently I tried to decide where to order meal from and found myself overwhelmed with choice. I made my decision solely on the basis of the ratings and reviews made by other people online. It became a simple yet potent illustration of how social proof guides our choices. In another instance, this principle led me down a path that did not align with my true interests. I made an unfortunate decision years ago to study programming, only because my friends and family insisted that it was the only good choice and studying philology was a waste of time and I actually believed it myself. I recall another situation in my school years when I only pretended to be a big fan of a certain rock band, just because everyone else loved them. The desire to conform to the group's preferences triumphed over my genuine feelings.

Liking is another principle listed by Cialdini and revolves basically around being influenced by people we know, like or admire. Applying this principle in certain situations involves finding common ground, expressing appreciation or forming friendships. There were a couple situations in my professional work when I faced certain dilemmas and different people suggested different approaches. I admit, I made my final decision based not on logic but simply liking a particular person more. The same mechanism is widely used in different commercials or marketing and political campaigns and again I also fell for that at a certain point, when I bought a pair of sneakers purely because I was a fan of a famous sportsman that advertised them. I also noticed that during job interviews that I have had, I always get along with interviewers that share similar interests or simply like their energy and personality.

The fifth principle described by Cialdini is authority. According to the author, people very often tend to trust or obey figures of authority. When we encounter an authoritative figure, our decision-making is more likely to be influenced by them or their expertise and credibility and we are more likely to comply with their requests. Like many people, I also faced many challenges during recent pandemic era and not only because of the particular virus but also worldwide panic and desinformation. I decided to trust only the specialist in medical fields and made many decisions, like taking a vaccine, based solely on their recommendations. I also always respected and obeyed teachers at school, even if I questioned their methods internally or simply did not like them. The authority they held over me was simply enough. Similar to medical cases I also always prefer to trust IT specialists when it comes to computer or internet issues. Not that long ago my work desktop stopped working and instead of trying to fix it myself, I decided to trust and contact local IT which was probably much better choice.

The last principle that Cialdini describes is scarcity. We encounter this particular one very often in marketing, since it refers to the idea that people value things much more when they perceive them as scarce or available in limited supply. Cialdini states that we are more likely to be drawn to something due to its perceived scarcity, a rare opportunity or a product in high demand. More often than once I bought something simply because of these reasons, like a new limited edition of manga that I am a huge fan of. I am also a huge fan of live concerts and scarcity is inherent in this particular area, especially when it comes to famous bands. I managed to get lucky and attend some of these shows only because I bought the tickets very quickly out of fear that they may be sold out in seconds. Among many other things I also enjoy discovering and buying new technological gadgets which also release very often in a limited supply or in special editions. For financial reasons I am not always able to buy them at launch but it happened to more once or twice, most recently with a new limited release of a popular gaming console.

From the friendly exchange of favors to our unwavering commitment to goals, the influence of social proof in our choices, the impact of authority figures, the power of personal connections, and the allure of scarcity - these

principles are like silent puppeteers, subtly guiding our decisions. Through relatable stories and everyday examples, I attempted to uncover the art of saying "yes" in various contexts. As we navigate the intricacies of reciprocity, commitment, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity, it becomes clear that these principles are not just abstract concepts. They are without doubt, and as shown in my own own exaples, the invisible guidelines that lead us through our daily lives, shaping the choices we make and the paths we tread.